collective thinking among the political leadership and projects a dim future for women. One article cannot adequately address the problems facing women and certainly the insinuation that corruption and denegration must necessarily rise from women's public presence is deplorable.

Most Afghan refugees maintain an outwardly conservative stance because to do otherwise would compromise the reputations of both sexes. Nevertheless, both male and female critics contend that such ultra-conservative attitudes denying women active roles in society are perversions of the true values for which so many martyrs have sacrificed their lives.

Moreover, many predict that the stand of the hard-liners will crumble once some semblance of normalcy resumes. These prospects will be discussed more fully below, but some demographic changes affecting female attitudes toward work should first be mentioned.

Demographic changes

Possibly nearly a million men have been killed or disabled in the jehad although accurate figures are impossible to obtain. There are tens of thousands of widows with their children among the refugees; thousands of young girls have lost their intended mates; other thousands have suddenly become sole supporters of their households because their husbands are totally disabled.

Tradition will dictate that these women be provided for as enjoined in the Quran (S.4:36). The Interim Government Guidelines reaffirms this commitment in Article XVI, as do the party charters. For instance, Article 15 of the Charter of the

Jatha-e-Melli-e-Nejat-e-Afghanistan (Mojeddedi), states that the party must "support the creation of all kinds of facilities for helping families whose guardians and or members have achieved the high position of martyrdom or have lost their capacity to work" (<u>Afghan Jehad</u>:74).

No one has yet suggested any practical means for accomplishing this. Recent tentative discussions have only just begun to identify some of the social problems which will accompany the economic responsibilities of caring for so many unattached women with their numerous children.

More multiple marriages seem to be taking place. Indeed, the institution of plural marriages in Islam was encouraged in the time of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) when wars left countless women and children without sustenance and protection. The customary practice of the leverite whereby a widow is forced to marry her deceased husband's brother in direct violation of a Quranic injunction (S. 4:19) is reported to be on the rise after years of decline. Other widows reluctantly marry older men or subteenagers, some only seven years old, in order to provide for their children.

Another worrisome development is the apparent breakdown of normal marriage contract procedures. Although discriminatory practices of marrying girls to pay off debts or acquire political or social advantages were by no means unknown (Olesen, 1982), preferred marriage partners were first cousins, and, in general,

elaborate rituals associated with the selection of mates were mindful of the future well-being of the bride. Older women were responsible for assessing the age and character of the groom as well as the acceptability of his family. They drove hard bargains for advantageous financial arrangements to ensure respect and status for the bride. These important responsibilities were an integral part of maintaining a woman's status within the family and throughout her women's networks and communities (Doubleday, 1987).

These women's networks have largely broken down among the refugee communities in Pakistan because mobility is so restricted. Too many first cousins have been killed, desirable men are at a premium so, sadly, too many marriages are being contracted hastily, by men, for less than palatable considerations.

Urban refugees are also loath to incur marriage expenses because of their poor economic situation. Inadequate education is another deterrent. Educational facilities for all refugees are minimal and many young men opt for the jehad rather than school. The paucity of eligible educated men further depletes a girl's chances for marriage. Because of these factors, numbers of educated refugee girls, although they have passed the traditionally preferred age for marriage, rebel against becoming second wives or marriage to the old, the immature, the poorly educated.

Changing attitudes toward work outside the home.

Although the political rhetoric guarantees services for

widows and wives of the disabled, it will be a long time before any state apparatus can expect to provide effective services. A lot therefore will depend on the women themselves and their attitudes toward work.

To understand changes which appear to be taking place among the refugees, a few brief comments on the status of women in the workforce before the war should be mentioned.

According to a preliminary census taken in 1972 (Kerr, 1978:2) and related government statistics, only about 8% of women over the age of eight, in both urban and rural areas, were economically active, i.e. receiving earnings, in 1975 (Afghan Demographic Studies (ADS), 1975:93). However, several qualifications need to be kept in mind regarding these figures. Housewives were not included, and many unpaid economic contributions to household and community were taken for granted (Doubleday, 1988). In addition, gainful employment of women was considered to reflect shamefully on male ego-images as sole supporters of their families. Many women did work for earnings, but this was rarely admitted to outsiders, least of all census takers.

In the rural sample of production-related activities, including agriculture and animal husbandry (Tavakolian, 1984), weavers and spinners represented the highest percent of women reporting earned income. Women from poorer families working as servants for the more affluent, were also included in this sample.

Significantly absent were the managerial services rural

women performed, although unpaid and largely unsung. The management of the household and the training of young girls was totally in their hands, and women were usually the custodians of family finances and household supplies. These women, typically matriarchs, were responsible for distributing harvested supplies in amounts calculated to last until the next harvest was brought in. If she was inept, the family either starved or went into debt. These qualities belied the stereotypes which characterized rural women as helpless, ignorant non-entities (personal observations 1962-1978). These qualities are important assets which have sustained women in exile; they will be of inordinate importance after repatriation.

In the field of handicrats, 87% of the total number of workers producing items for sale were women (Central Statistics, 1975). However, the vast majority of women's handicrafts were never offered for sale. The women sewed, embroidered and wove for their families, most particularly to fill the hope chests of prospective brides. Most families considered it shameful to sell the handiwork made by their women.

Handicraft production for economic gain was mostly a regional phenomenon. Knotted-carpet weaving and felt-making dominated in the north, including Herat; flat-woven carpets (gelim) were produced in the north also, but in large numbers around Ghazni and in the Hazarajat as well. In Kandahar and the Hilmand Valley, embroidered and beaded cap-making was

popular. Embroidered turban caps (<u>kola</u>) were mostly offered for sale in the northern cities, although almost every family made them for family use. Embroidered sheepskin coats (<u>postin</u>) which enjoyed great popularity during the 1960s and 70s in the West were made predominately in Kabul where Afghan and foreign entrepreneurs set up workshops, although the craft was native to the Ghazni area. Foreign designers set up thriving businesses by providing gelim-makers with modern, state-of-the-art designs.

As mentioned previously almost all these economic activities were joint male/female efforts: the men secured the raw materials and managed the marketing of the goods made by women. As in all discussions of Afghan patterns, however, exceptions must be noted. Women sometimes took embroidered turban caps to market-places in the north, and they sold beaded caps and embroidered shirt pieces on the sidewalks of Kandahar.

Most women in the workforce were found in the cities: mainly in the capital city of Kabul, but in increasing numbers in provincial urban centers. By far the highest percent were professionals, technicians and administrators employed by the government, with a lesser number in sales and production, or self-employed in private enterprises. These included shop owners, shop workers, household-based sellers, street vendors, knitters, tailors, hair stylists, embroiderers, and food and beverage producers running small, household-based factories (ADS, 1987).

As noted, in most of pre-war Afghanistan gainful extra-domestic activities for women were generally discouraged. In Pakistan today, however, economic distress and the idleness and boredom of refugee life have tempered this attitude. When men are unable to find jobs, their insistance on purdah becomes less rigid. As one charismatic lady nurse put it: When there is no food on the table, men open the door.

Rural women are participating in growing numbers of income-generating and self-reliance programmes consisting largely of refugee-oriented tailoring projects producing quilts, school uniforms and bags. Those who can embroider fashion pieces of exquisite beauty which are stitched by other refugee women into garments and sundries under the supervision of designers, mostly foreigners.

Urban women, mostly from families of mid-to-lower range professionals and bureaucrats, assist in administering these projects. Others attend, teach at or manage higher education institutions, including nurses-training, clerical instruction and English language classes. There is now an obstetrics and gynaecology hospital with mobile clinics for outreach staffed entirely by Afghan women professionals. Others administer social welfare programmes, making weekly trips into the refugee camps to identify needy cases.

Most of these women must be provided door-to-door transportation. This means that although women professionals are

desperately needed in the remoter refugee camps, few are permitted to work when overnight stays are required. Many widows, however, must find their own way to social service projects located in Peshawar, proving that when the need is great and the services are suitably structured, women will take the initiative to be more independent.

Leadership qualities among rural women are being utilized through the training of female community health workers. These programmes prove that women learn well and quickly and that they can pass on information persuasively, particularly in the areas of preventive and primary health care. Success has been most notable when individual workers are assigned units of up to 30 houses within their own sections of the refugee camps. This creates a semblance of pre-war ethnically-oriented, kin-related villages and urban wards.

Some of the more effective health education teaching materials on personal and environmental hygiene reflect Islam's emphasis on cleanliness (S. 4:43 and S. 5:6). One booklet promoting good health practices as an integral part of Islam rather than a set of medical requirements makes extensive use of the Hadith, Sayings of the Prophet (Shaheen, 1986). These materials cover such topics as proper nutrition, breast feeding, weaning, hand washing, dental hygiene and proscriptions against depositing human wastes near water sources and public places.

Thus, more and more women are taking advantage of opportunities and as more women participate, programs expand.

PROSPECTS

How then do refugee women envision their roles once they return to Afghanistan? With tragic exceptions, their composure is remarkable. It may be that with all they have gone through, and are going through now, the future cannot be imagined to be any worse. It may also be that many cannot conceive how great the devastation is, and what a monumental task lies before them.

Nevertheless, contrary to those who sense the vaunted Afghan family support system is breaking down, the vast majority of these women put their faith in their families and their communities at large (N.H.Dupree, 1977b). Most look forward to returning to normal domestic lives. Motherhood will remain the foremost priority option for the majority of Afghan women.

Those without past histories of working for earned income outside the home confess they have uncertain feelings about the future. They work here mainly to augment meagre incomes and assuage boredom, but they also consider the assistance they give to disadvantaged women as their contribution to the jehad. Consequently their work is ego-satisfying, and some similingly admit that getting out of the house and making extra money on their own has been a gratifying new experience. Perhaps, they concede, their former purely domestic life-style will seem too confining when they return.

THE ROLE OF AFGHAN WOMEN AFTER REPATRIATION

Nancy Hatch Dupree
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Peshawar September 1988

INTRODUCTION

The Geneva Accords signed by the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan (ROA) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (GOP) in Geneva on 14 April 1988 called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and included a Bilateral Agreement concerning the voluntary return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. This Agreement proposed the establishment of a mixed Commission for the purpose of coordinating and supervising the operations (Article IV); it requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide assistance in this effort (Article VI). The Agreement is to remain in effect for a period of eighteen months beginning on 15 May, when further arrangements may be made (Article VII; United States Senate, 1988:38-39).

On 11 May, UN Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, appointed Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan as the Coordinator for

These women from mainly educated mid-income urban families are candidly pragmatic when they speak of the future. Here their work is respected because it is an important part of the overall jehad effort. But many members of their families remain in Afghanistan and have no conception of the refugee mentality. Will these members be reconciled to the idea of women producing items for sale or attending workplaces outside the home? Or will they still consider it shameful for women to engage in such activities? Social pressures will figure prominently in determining what these women may or may not do on their return.

Women also worry about the attitudes of younger men whose lives have been totally consumed by emotions rising from ten years of war. When the enemy has gone, these women ask, who will be the object of their aggressions? May it not take the form of restricting, or even oppressing, women?

Professional women wonder if they will be given constructive options if prevailing attitudes "keep us cooped up like a lot of chickens." One articulate woman recounts with scorn the day a prominent political leader offhandedly remarked: "Do not worry, we shall make you ministers - of your own households." She was not amused.

Such encounters lead educated women to speak of waging two jehads (struggles): a jehad against foreign invaders, and, a jehad against an undesirable ideology. The professionals

know they will be desperately needed in post-repatriation Afghanistan and many men, including professionals in Pakistan and military commanders inside Afghanistan acknowledge that Islam encourages education for women, obligates women to work for the good of the community and assures women equal recognition for work (S.4:32). Nevertheless, they insist there is no reason why women cannot carryout their tasks adequately while still observing purdah.

Such views do not rise entirely from the refugee experience. Pre-war attitudes toward co-education, for instance, were decidedly ambivalent. From co-educational primary schools pupils moved on to separate secondary schools and then came together again at Kabul University. Maturity, it was reasoned, would ensure proper social behavior, but in reality a good deal of uneasiness existed. Similarly, although men and women worked together in offices, women were expected to socialize within the family and not with their colleagues (Knabe, 1977).

And it must be remembered that the desirability of public participation of women was advocated mainly by the more Westernized groups in urban centers (N.H.Dupree, 1984:309). Others harbored an honest distaste for Western-style institutions and warned that education and emancipation for women must surely lead to sexual anarchy and the total destruction of Afghan culture. These undercurrents of dissent errupted periodically (L. Dupree, 1971:17), and it is these attitudes which have

risen to the forefront during the past ten years.

Indeed, many women engaged in activities in Pakistan do not question the appropriateness of segregated programmes. They dress in Arab-style chadri, ankle-length coatdresses with separate cape-like head-coverings, which they say is an Islamic symbol which will be worn by Muslim throughout the world to proclaim unity among the Islamic ummah (community). These women are equally committed to participating in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

One positive development has been what numbers of young women, regardless of their stand on purdah, describe as "a gift of the jehad" - a new sense of service.

Before the war it was extremely difficult to motivate urban professional women to work outside urban centers. Extension work carried no status and no extra remuneration, but beyond this the reluctance of city women even to contemplate service in the countryside stemmed in good part from the fact that urban women were almost completely isolated from rural populations. They believed in the stereotyped image which depicted rural women as superstitious, backward ignoramuses too stupid to help themselves. Few ventured beyond the city; many were genuinely afraid to do so.

In Pakistan these women have come in contact with rural women for the first time and have developed a compassion for them as well as an admiration for their resourcefulness and

strength. And the *jehad* has enhanced their understanding of Islamic values which in essence stress egalitarianism and service to the community.

How long such attitudes will endure after these girls resume lives with some degree of normalcy is hard to predict, but an unique opportunity exists to promote these sentiments before they dissipate for lack of opportunities.

On returning, refugee women will interact with women who have remained in Kabul. The leftist government's promised era of absolute equality of women with men never materialized (Beattie, 1984; Tapper, 1984). Female Party members enjoyed certain privileges but in reality no positive reform-oriented programmes on behalf of women were implemented (N.H. Dupree, 1984:327-339). Initially, these Party members may be ostracized and require special consideration, but the non-party women who continued to participate in the multifacted opportunities begun before the war will probably reinforce efforts by returning refugee women to establish constructive programming.

Therefore, no matter what the complexion of the future government may assume, the leadership will have to provide a dignified place for women. Women will demand it and they will not be denied.

APPROACHES TOWARD INVOLVEMENT

In spite of the fact that the number of involved women is minuscule, a heartening momentum has begun. It will be tragic if women are underutilized as they were in the past because old-style ineffective systems are reintroduced. Now is the time to start anew by introducing innovative planning strategies bearing direct impact on the welfare of women. This means women should be included in all phases of reconstruction planning.

It must be realized, however, that separate-but-equal policies may well be reinstituted, at least initially. Typically such separate institutions are far from equal, but this does not need to be so if equitable planning, financing, equipping and monitoring are assiduously promoted. Separate need not imply inferior if vigilance is institutionalized.

Programming in both urban and rural areas should focus on small local communities so women may reestablish women's networks and communities, providing services allowing them to achieve self-sufficiency and fulfill social and personal goals. Such women's programming should be coordinated with and compliment overall health and education programs which initially will be of high priority. Specialized programs will follow.

Fortunately, recent developments in Pakistan will further this objective. In June 1988 an Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, known as ACBAR, was organized by over 50 NGOs

working in Pakistan (N.H.Dupree, 1988b), and with cross-border programmes. ACBAR is dedicated to the principle that the Afghans must take the lead, with the assistance of the international community, in nuturing grassroots programmes which will be culturally compatible and flexible enough to include a variety of approaches accommodating distinct geographic, social and economic needs. Women's needs figure prominently in their planning.

These include specific priorities such as the social rehabilitation of paraplegics and other handicapped which to date has been a sadly neglected component of refugee and reconstruction planning. According to conservative estimates, possibly 3-5000 Afghan women, children and men have been disabled; one among ten children will have to contend with a lifetime of physical disfigurement (Appeal of the Secretary-General, 1988:30-31).

The handicapped are difficult for any society to care for adequately and constructively. This is all the more acute for Afghanistan which is technically unprepared and socially ill-equipped to provide a dignified place for the disabled. Handicapped women are most often set aside by husbands who take second wives and consigned to lives of abject lonliness. Instead of being isolated, men, women and children must be provided with education and trades so that they may assume respected places within their families. These skills can then be utilized to bring them into the mainstream of society to pursue productive,

rewarding lives while contributing to reconstruction.

The same will be true for widows and wives of the disabled who will constitute the largest group of women in need of increased earning potential. Instead of making them burdens on society, they must be given the means to become contributing members. This can be done through extending credit facilities permitting them to establish small business utilizing surplus production of dairy products, poultry, fruit and vegetable processing, sericulture and handicrafts.

Critics point to the fact that Afghan women have rarely engaged in such activities. True, but as noted above, men and women traditionally worked together in interrelated family production/marketing endeavours. There seems no reason why these patterns could not be extended to new enterprises or even include non-family members in kin-related communities, thus strengthening community cohesiveness.

The community health worker programmes already functioning in Pakistan should be expanded. These will need numerous support components in which educated urban women could be involved, including all fields of training in community servies, the production of non-formal education teaching aids, radio programming, and management. An employment exchange will be needed to facilitate these programmes.

Most importantly there must be some means of allowing women's voices to be heard. Afghan women have never been

militant in demanding the rights provided them in legal statutes (N.H.Dupree, 1984:311), and there is no reason to push them into doing so. But judging from current attitudes in Pakistan, they would welcome the establishment of a non-political, non-formal meeting place where women could exchange views in a relaxed social environment.

How these goals may best be realized will depend on the composition of a new government in Kabul. Regional and ethnic particulars, available personnel, local conditions and attitudes will affect the selection of specific projects and details will necessarily remain in abeyance until these assessments are made. Certainly, to propose that women step out prematurely would be detrimental in the long run.

However, if cultural sensitivities are respected, the future may be viewed optimistically. Afghan women are strong - they are confident - they will find a way. They deserve support.

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United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan; a month later (11 June) the Secretary-General issued an appeal on behalf of the People of Afghanistan, including an estimated budget of US$1.16 billion for the first 18 months of Relief-Repatriation and an additional US$848 million for 3 years of Reconstruction-Recovery programmes during 1990-1993 (Appeal of the Secretary-General, 1988).

These estimates, compiled from exhaustive, but hastily compiled, reports by individual agencies within the UN system, covered such components as food, shelter, health, education, agriculture, communications, roads, industries, and power. A cultural survey to determine war damages to historical monuments, museums and archives was also included.

No component addressed the special needs of women.

As of October 1988 no appreciable number of refugees had returned due to the fact that the war continues and political solutions have yet to be determined. The singlemost factor deterring the refugees, however, is the presence of an estimated 10-16 million landmines which have already killed or maimed upwards of 25,000 men, women and children (New York Times, 14 August 1988), and will threaten lives for years to come. Nine million dollars were budgeted in the Secretary-General's appeal to tackle what was described by a spokesman for the Coordinator as the largest mine-clearing task the world has ever

faced. To accomplish this plans are being made to provide intensive training among the refugees and populations remaining in the liberated areas o Afghanistan so that each village can organize disposal teams composed of men, women and children capable of identifying and neutralizing the mines. Offers of equipment and training assistance have been received from over a dozen nations. The preparation of teaching materials in Afghan languages and materials appropriate for instruction for non-literates are major priorities.

All these programmes will take time, as will the resolution of major military and political matters; precious time in which much needs to be accomplished if new disasters and hardships are to be avoided. The UN system, together with large numbers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are meeting these challenges through projects too numerous to mention, including expanding and accelerating immunization coverage and supplementary feeding for women and children to ensure that the returnees are in the best possible health before they leave Pakistan. Nutritional anemia, due in good part to an alarming birth rate of 400 live births per 1000 women (Krijgh, 1987;28), is dangerously high and increasing numbers of premature and underweight babies are vulnerable to a variety of mental and development problems (L. and N.H.Dupree, 1988:19).

Intensified programmes for training community health workers , male and female, are being launched. It will be a

long time before health systems for the rural areas can be effectively established and the returnees will be dependent upon these trained health workers for basic, primary health care. Diarrhea, for instance, is the primary cause of infant and child mortality and ORT (Oral Rehydration Therapy) is an effective remedy relatively simple to administer. The more women instructed in the preparation of ORS (Oral Rehydration Salts), the stronger the population will be. Sanitarians and potable water experts are also being trained to enhance these programmes.

An urgent task yet to be adequately undertaken is the assessment of the special needs of women to ensure not only their physical welfare but enable them to develop their true potential. Women's programmes simply will not be integrated into the total development strategy for Afghanistan unless attention is focused on the specialness of women's needs. This does not mean women's programmes should be gender-exclusive; they should be fully integrated to allow maximum involvement for without the participation of women no development scheme will succeed.

This paper addresses some of the patterns which appear to be emerging and explores the manner in which these patterns are affecting the way Afghan women view the future. Finally a few possible approaches are proposed which may offer women a

productive, participatory role in rebuilding Afghanistan. The discussion is based on sixteen years residence in Afghanistan and research among the refugees in Pakistan from 1978 through the summer of 1988.

CURRENT PATTERNS

Background

The situation of women among the refugees in Pakistan has changed dramatically in the ten years since refugees began arriving in numbers far beyond the ability of local groups to extend traditional tribal hospitality (N.H. Dupree, 1987:376). Congestion in the Refugee Tented Villages established after April 1979 by the GOP and UNHCR imposed psychological as well as physical hardships on women, the majority of whom came from villages where they generally enjoyed spacious quarters and relatively free movement within kin-related and/or tribally-oriented settlements. The division of responsibility and labour within households was gender-based, but close inter-relationships between male/female roles were acknowledged by all parties and this gave rise to mutual respect (N.H.Dupree, 1988a:36-37).

Current Patterns

In Pakistan, however, the refugee concentrations crowded together diverse tribal and ethnic groups from different geographic

regions. Women are consequently severely restricted. In addition, the natural tendency of threatened societies to overly protect women imposes strict restraints because in Afghanistan women are responsible for upholding family and national honour and perpetuating those social and cultural values the massive exodus seeks to preserve (N.H.Dupree, 1988:43). A visit to a clinic is still almost the only respectable outing for many women, and untold numbers are denied even this small iota of freedom (Krijgh, 1987:24).

Until recently young urban women brought up to take education and careers for granted (Rahimi, 1986), sat idly at home. Many continue to do so.

Initially education for girls was anathama. Regarding education as a pathway to social corruption and Communism, a tool of infidels, most refugee populations at first resisted all attempts to establish even primary schools for girls. Such impassioned denials have gradually diminished but girls' schools among the rural refugee populations are woefully inadequate and primarily attended by the very young. Furthermore, as was the case in pre-war Afghanistan, even those who learn to read quickly forget because there are no reading materials to sustain them.

Among urban women, however, a veritable explosion has taken place within the last three to four years. Although these women

by no means enjoy anything remotely akin to past educational opportunities, a discernable momentum carries them forward. To give only one example, enrolment at Malalai High School, one of the handful of secondary schools for women in Peshawar, nearly quadrupled during the past year (International Rescue Committee, 1988:5). Its very existence is a miracle considering its controversial beginnings. Other girls attend special classes of various sorts and all these institutions underscore the fact that these women have been pent up for too long. They are raring to go and the energy generated by their anticipations is palpable.

A good number of these young women use these short-term classes as stepping stones to employment; others train in teaching institutions such as the women's hospitals. A lucky talented few have gained admission to Pakistani medical schools.

Who are these girls and what motivates them to pursue opportunities when the social environment still views such activities to be improper, if not to the threatening degree of vilification expressed during the early years?

They come from a variety of geographic areas but mostly from urban areas, particularly Kabul, where their male family members were for the most part mid-range government bureaucrats or professionals who traditionally encouraged education for women (N.H. Dupree, 1984:305-309). Family support, therefore, is the key factor.

They are also motivated by various economic factors for urban refugees living outside the official refugee camps are not entitled to refugee assistance and consequently experience considerable economic hardships. Scores of men remain jobless but the relief organizations are desperate for qualified women. Almost every educated woman willing to work can find employment, if the family approves.

These positive changes, however, are tempered by continuing disputes regarding the appropriateness of activities for women in the context of Islam. Participants are minuscule, therefore, in terms of the overall population and their needs.

Tense debates take place between those who have been kept in strict seclusion since the inception of the exodus and new arrivals who feel humiliated by unaccustomed restraints. These exchanges reflect the uneasiness accompanying current attempts to inject conservative ideals into moderate segments of Afghan society which have encouraged women to participate in the totality of the society for over half a century.

Charters issued by the political leadership in Peshawar, mindful of the values for which their ten-year jehad (struggle) has been fought, are based on the primacy of Islamic principles. Regarding women, these charters range from explicit insistence on strict seclusion (Hezb-e-Islami (Gulbuddin), art. 7, the veil; art. 31, separate schools; art. 81, separate workplaces; Afghan Jehad: 61-62, 68) to general statements supporting "social,

economic and political justice and the participation of all the people, both women and men, in the task of development ... in accordance with the principles of Islam and acceptable Afghan traditions" (Mahaz-e-Melli Islami-e-Afghanistan (Gailani) art. 5, Afghan Jehad:56). Other vague buzz phrases without clarification simply anticipate that "women (will) assume their proper status in a civilized Islamic society," (Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan (Rabbani; Afghan Jehad:78).

The latest official pronouncement disturbed many men as well as women. In March 1988 the Supreme Council of the seven-party Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin (IUAM) sponsored the formation of an Interim Mujahidin Government (IMG) and on the 24th of May they published a set of guidelines for this body (Ittehad-e-Islami, 1988:1). This document consists of four chapters with eighty-seven articles. Only one specifically mentions women.

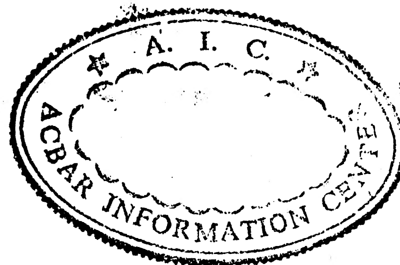
Article LVII, in Chapter III outlining the Duties of Government, directs the government to:

> "Develop moral virtues and combat corruption and denegration by observing the principles of purdah (seclusion) provided for in the Sharia, ensure the unalienable rights of all individuals, men and women alike, and provide dignified conditions in the light of Islamic teachings."

Although the effectiveness of the Interim Government is widely questioned, this document seems to reflect a disturbing

THE ROLE OF AFGHAN WOMEN AFTER REPATRIATION

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